

**United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service**

Aviation Safety Alert

No. 2002-15

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Subject: Defective Forgecraft Model 3144 Hooks

Area of Concern: Helicopter Rappel Operations

Distribution: All Aviation and Fire Personnel

Discussion: A safety problem has been identified with a component used in wildland fire helicopter rappel operations. There is a defect in some of the Forgecraft model 3144 hooks used to connect the rappeller harness to the descent device. The spring-loaded locking detent pins on some of the hooks were improperly joined, which allow the 2 halves of the detent pins to be unscrewed.

The process for determining whether a Forgecraft model 3144 hook detent pin is defective is to grasp one end of the detent pin with the fingers of one hand while grasping the other end of the detent pin with the fingers of the other hand. Attempt to unscrew (turn left to loosen) the 2 halves of the pin. A correctly joined detent pin should not allow any independent movement between the 2 halves of the pin. If the pin unscrews partially or completely, it is defective and the hook **SHOULD NOT BE USED.**

DO NOT use pliers, vises or other tools to grip the ends of the detent pin during examination. Doing so may damage a properly joined detent pin.

If you find a defective hook, **DO NOT** attempt to repair it yourself. Any repairs to the hook must be performed by the manufacturer.

For information on what to do with defective hooks, contact your regional Helicopter Operations Specialist or Tim Lynch, MTDC Equipment Specialist at 406-329-3958.

/s/ Morgan H. Mills

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